

WO 2005/052861

PCT/AU2004/001673

- 23 -

CLAIMS:

1. A communication system comprising:
determining means operable to determine an
5 attribute of a communication device;
identifying means operable to identify an avatar
by using the attribute, wherein the avatar is such that it
conveys to a viewer thereof information about a person; and
communicating means operable to communicate the
10 avatar to the communication device.
2. The communication system as claimed in claim
1, further comprising replacing means operable to replace
the avatar with another avatar.
15
3. The communication system as claimed in claim
2, wherein the identifying means is operable to identify
the avatar by comparing the attribute to a communication
device identifier that is associated with the avatar.
20
4. The communication system as claimed in claim
3, further comprising recording means arranged to allow the
person to record the communication device identifier.
25
5. The communication system as claimed in claim
4, wherein the replacing means is further operable to
replace the communication device identifier with another
communication device identifier.
30
6. The communication system as claimed in claim
5, further comprising selecting means operable to allow the
person to select the avatar from a plurality of other
avatars.
35
7. The communication system as claimed in claim
6, wherein the selecting means is further operable to allow
the communication device identifier to be selected from a

WO 2005/052861

PCT/AU2004/001673

- 24 -

plurality of other communication device identifiers.

8. The communication system as claimed in claim 7, wherein the communicating means is operable to 5 communicate the avatar to the communication device in a virtual environment.

9. The communication system as claimed in claim 8, wherein the determining means is operable to determine 10 the attribute by processing caller identification data associated with the communication device.

10. The communication system as claimed in claim 9, further comprising messaging means operable to create a 15 text, an audio and/or a video message that is associated with the avatar.

11. The communication system as claimed in claim 10, wherein the avatar and the plurality of other avatars 20 depict an activity that involves the person.

12. The communication system as claimed in claim 11, wherein the communication device comprises a mobile telephone and the attribute comprises a telephone number of 25 the mobile telephone.

13. A communication system comprising:
an environment support means operable to support at least one virtual environment that can be accessed by a 30 first person; and

a communicating means operable to communicate an avatar in the virtual environment to the first person subsequent to the first person accessing the environment, the avatar being such that it can convey to the first 35 person information about a second person.

14. The communication system as claimed in claim

WO 2005/052861

PCT/AU2004/001673

- 25 -

13, which the environment support means is operable to determine a level of authority associated with the second person, and provide the second person with access to the virtual environment if the level of authority is deemed
5 appropriate.

15. The communication system as claimed in claim 14, wherein the environment support means is operable to allow the first person to assign the level of authority.

10

16. The communication system as claimed in claim 15, wherein the environment support means is such that it allows the first person to arrange the virtual environment such that it has a desired appearance.

15

17. The communication system as claimed in claim 16, wherein the environment support means is operable to allow the first person and the second person to exchange other information via the virtual environment.

20

18. The communication system as claimed in claim 17, wherein the other information comprises multi-media content.

25

19. The communication system as claimed in claim 18, wherein the communicating means is further operable to allow the second person to control whether the avatar conveys the information to the first person.

30

20. The communication system as claimed in claim 19, wherein the environment support means is operable to allow the first person to access the virtual environment via a communication network, the communicating means also being operable to communicate the avatar in the virtual environment to the first person via the communication network.

35

WO 2005/052861

PCT/AU2004/001673

- 26 -

21. The communication system as claimed in claim
20, wherein the information conveyed by the avatar to the
first person comprises audio and/or video information.

5 22. A communication system comprising:
identifying an avatar that conveys information
about a person; and
communicating means operable to communicate the
avatar to a mobile communication device.

10 23. A communication method comprising the steps
of:
determining an attribute of a communication
device;

15 identifying an avatar by using the attribute,
wherein the avatar is such that it conveys to a viewer
thereof information about a person; and
communicating the avatar to the communication
device.

20 24. The method as claimed in claim 23, further
comprising the step of replacing the avatar with another
avatar.

25 25. The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein
the step of identifying the avatar comprises identifying
the avatar by comparing the attribute to a communication
device identifier that is associated with the avatar.

30 26. The method as claimed in claim 25, further
comprising the step of recording the communication device
identifier.

35 27. The method as claimed in claim 26, further
comprising the step of replacing the communication device
identifier with another communication device identifier.

WO 2005/052861

PCT/AU2004/001673

- 27 -

28. The method as claimed in claim 27, further comprising the step of selecting the avatar from a plurality of other avatars.

5 29. The method as claimed in claim 28, further comprising the step of selecting the communication device identifier from a plurality of other communication device identifiers.

10 30. The method as claimed in claim 29, further comprising the step of communicating the avatar to the communication device in a virtual environment.

15 31. The method as claimed in claim 30, wherein the step of determining the attribute comprises determining the attribute by processing caller identification data that is associated with the communication device.

20 32. The method as claimed in claim 31, further comprising the step of creating a text, an audio and/or a video message that is associated with the avatar.

25 33. The method as claimed in claim 32, wherein the avatar and the plurality of other avatars depict an activity that involves the person.

34. The method as claimed in claim 33, wherein the communication device is a mobile telephone and the attribute is a telephone number of the mobile telephone.

30 35. A communication method comprising the steps of:

supporting at least one virtual environment that can be accessed by a first person; and

35 communicating an avatar in the virtual environment to the first person subsequent to the first person accessing the environment, the avatar being such

WO 2005/052861

PCT/AU2004/001673

- 28 -

that it can convey to the first person information about a second person.

36. The method as claimed in claim 35, further
5 comprising the step of determining a level of authority associated with the second person, and providing the second person with access to the virtual environment if the level of authority is deemed appropriate.

10 37. The method as claimed in claim 36, further comprising the step of the first person assigning the level of authority.

15 38. The method as claimed in claim 37, wherein the step of supporting the virtual environment comprises the step of arranging the virtual environment such that it has a desired appearance.

20 39. The method as claimed in claim 38, further comprising the step of exchanging other information between the first person and the second person via the virtual environment.

25 40. The method as claimed in claim 39, wherein the other information comprises multi-media content.

30 41. The method as claimed in claim 40, wherein the step of communicating the avatar to the first person comprises the step of controlling whether the avatar conveys the information to the first person.

35 42. The method as claimed in claim 41, further comprising the step of allowing the first person to access the virtual environment via a communication network, and the step of communicating the avatar in the virtual environment to the first person via the communication network.

WO 2005/052861

PCT/AU2004/001673

- 29 -

43. The method as claimed in claim 42, wherein
the information conveyed by the avatar to the first person
comprises audio and/or video information.

5

44. Software comprising at least one instruction
for causing a computing device to carry out the method as
claimed in any one of claims 23 to 43.

10

45. A computer readable medium comprising the
software as claimed in claim 44.